

Message Text

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ACTION H-03

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0254

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (DIGGS, CHARLES C.)

SUBJECT: CODEL DIGGS: TALK WITH PRESIDENT SIAD

REF: FBIS LONDON 131710Z FEB 75

1. SUMMARY. DURING HOUR LONG CONVERSATION WITH CONGRESSMAN DIGGS FEBRUARY 14, PRESIDENT SIAD EXPRESSED HOPE THAT WITH RECENT IMPROVEMENT IN BILATERAL RELATIONS, US MIGHT PROVIDE SOMALIA WITH FURTHER ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. HE ALSO URGED USG TO HELP BRING ABOUT CHANGES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WHICH WOULD RESTORE RIGHTS OF AFRICAN MAJORITY AND TO TAKE MORE "EVEN HANDED" APPROACH TO MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM, IN THE INTERESTS OF PERMANENT PEACE IN THE AREA. END SUMMARY.

2. ON FEB. 14 CONGRESSMAN DIGGS, ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR AND DCM, HAD HOUR-LONG CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT SIAD, WHO LED OFF SESSION BY CONGRATULATING DIGGS ON STATEMENT MADE AT AIRPORT UPON ARRIVAL MOGADISCIO FEB. 13 WHEN CONGRESSMAN CRITICIZED SOUTH AFRICA FOR VISA DENIAL. SIAD SAID HE HAD DIRECTED SOMALI MEDIA TO PUBLICIZE DIGGS STATEMENT (IT WAS HEADLINED IN HORSEED FEB. 14). SIAD SAID HE WAS EXTREMELY GRATIFIED TO HEAR US CONGRESSMAN EXPRESS STRONG OPPOSITION TO VORSTER'S REGIME. HE ASKED DIGGS ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF RSA RE-EXAMINING ITS RACIST POLICIES AND BRINGING SOUTH AFRICA INTO THE MODERN WORLD. HE SAID APARTHEID MIGHT CONTINUE TO ENDURE OVER SHORT AND MEDIUM TERM, BUT RACIAL EQUALITY WOULD FINALLY WIN OUT. US, AS ONE OF STRONGEST DEMOCRATIC POWERS, SHOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO PERSUADE VORSTER OF THE FOLLY OF CLINGING TO AN OPPRESSIVE CREED TO WHICH WHOLE WORLD OBJECTED.

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3. SOMALI/US RELATIONS. PRESIDENT SIAD EXPRESSED HIS GREAT PLEASURE IN MEETING WITH PRESIDENT FORD IN WASHINGTON IN OCTOBER. HE SAID HE HAD SPOKEN FRANKLY AND HONESTLY WITH THE PRESIDENT IN DESCRIBING THE PROBLEMS SOMALIA CURRENTLY FACING. SOV/US DETENTE AND IMPROVEMENT IN US/CHINA RELATIONS INDICATED USG COULD REACH ACCOMMODATION WITH REGIMES WHOSE POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC IDEOLOGY WAS DIFFERENT FROM ITS OWN. SOMALIA WAS A SOCIALIST COUNTRY BUT THIS SHOULD NOT PREVENT MUTUAL COOPERATION. IN PAST YEARS, MISCHIEF-MAKERS IN US HAD IDENTIFIED SOMALIA AS BEING IN CHINESE OR SOVIET ORBIT AND , AS A RESULT, US/SOMALI RELATIONS HAD SUFFERED AND SOMALIA DENIED ACCESS TO US AID

RESOURCES. SIAD HOPED THAT ERA IS NOW PASSED AND HE THOUGHT THAT HIS CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT FORD HAD DONE MUCH TO RESOLVE MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

4. SIAD EXPRESSED GSDR GRATITUDE FOR QUICK RESPONSE FROM USG TO ITS REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FOR DROUGHT RELIEF. US PEOPLE WERE GENEROUS AND HE HOPED USG WOULD BE ABLE TO SUPPLY ADDITIONAL AID TO HELP SOMALIA IN ITS STRUGGLE TO OVERCOME THE EFFECTS OF THE DROUGHT AND TO DEVELOP ITS ECONOMIC POTENTIAL. SOMALIA WAS RICH IN PHYSICAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES BUT LACKED TOOLS TO FULLY DEVELOP ITSELF. IT NEEDED MONEY, MACHINERY, AND TECHNICAL EXPERTISE.

5. ON SOVIET/SOMALI RELATIONS, SIAD SAID FALSE STORIES HAD BEEN CIRCULATED REGARDING SOVIET BASES IN SOMALIA. SOMALIA WAS POOR BUT PROUD COUNTRY AND WOULD NEVER SURRENDER SOVEREIGNTY TO ANY FOREIGN POWER FOR MILITARY BASE. SOVIET UNION HAD NO BASES IN SOMALIA. IT WAS TRUE HOWEVER THAT GSDR PROVIDED SOVIET NAVY WITH FACILITIES AND THAT SIMILAR FACILITIES WERE NOT PROVIDED US.

6. MIDDLE EAST. SIAD ALSO MADE VIGOROUS APPEAL FOR US TO PERSUADE ISRAEL TO WITHDRAW FROM OCCUPIED ARAB LANDS. HE SAID ZIONISM HAD EXERCISED STRONG BUT NEGATIVE INFLUENCE IN US OVER THE YEARS BUT ARAB STRENGTH NOW GROWING. ISRAEL MIGHT MANAGE TO MAINTAIN ITS TERRITORIAL CONQUESTS FOR FEW MORE YEARS BUT IN LONG RUN ARAB COUNTRIES WOULD INEVITABLY WIN OUT. GOI LEADERS, WHO WERE STUBBORNLY PURSUING SUICIDAL COURSE, THUS
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OWED IT TO FUTURE GENERATIONS IN ISRAEL TO REACH SETTLEMENT WITH NEIGHBORING ARAB COUNTRIES AND PALESTINIANS.

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